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16 October 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Gary Foster  
Chief, Office of Medical Services

FROM: 

SUBJECT: Synopsis: First Federal Women's Symposium on  
Career Issues and Strategies  
14 October 1987

Patricia Bailey: Federal Trade Commission Commissioner, recounted her experiences as a women with a PhD in foreign affairs seeking employment e.g. She had to take a typing test at State Department.

Her points were that women want to be treated fairly, have the right to make good or fail on their own and not be pre-judged, receive equal pay (especially when employers can find excuses for paying them less if they are unmarried, and conversely, if they are married) and to receive equal pensions.

She felt government service offered more opportunities for public service than the private sector. She pointed out that historically job turnovers in the first job have largely been on the male side as men are more career oriented than women. Regrettably she did not develop a statement "that women manage differently than men because they are raised differently and have different expectations."

Dr. Cox: Vice President of Chemical Manufacturers Association. She was a very positive chemical engineer. Her position was that women must develop, and present, a positive image. They must shake hands firmly, feel good about themselves, and create a package so that employers and colleagues remember them for a whole set of characteristics.

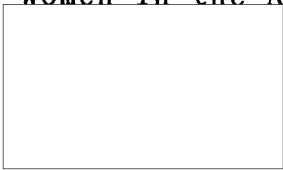
She remarked that men handle conflict in a macho way where someone must be the loser. Losers do not forget and the way to the top is not to create enemies. She had 6 components of power, (Position, Knowledge, Who knows you, Personal Charisma, Reward, Punishment) and they were to be used sparingly.

Whereas mediocrity was tolerated in men it was not tolerated in females. She urged women to take more risks, be willing to change from technical skills on entry to managerial skills in mid career, and to develop conceptual thinking. One should indicate to one's managers the direction you want your career to go.

I felt that in effect she was telling women to be more like men. She even went so far as to suggest that if one's voice were high and did not command attention one should take voice training to lower it. She did urge women to maintain their sense of humor.

Judy Mann: Columnist Washington Post. "When incompetant women are promoted at the same rate as incompetant men we will have achieved our position" (in the workplace). This speaker urged women to become more politically active by using their vote and their income to influence issues such as Child Care and Care for Elderly. She felt the American womens' movement was hung up on the Equal Rights Issue whereas European movements developed family support systems, child care, and unionism before going after equal rights.

Panel: Women in the Agency

STAT  These are 5 SIS out of the 26 female SIS at the top. Essentially they told a similar story. They generally established an area of expertise on entry and became known. They were willing to take judicial risks, changing tracks, taking a year off for interesting work, picking a mentor in some cases who was on the way up, and being lucky in other cases.

Several admitted that they had no conscious career plan and simply took broadening assignments. Only two seemed to have overseas experience. They described the bottleneck for women at the GS 13 level, there being twice as many women at 13 as there are at 14. Only 3% of the super grades are female and the percentage will decrease because the pool has so few women in it. There are no female policy makers. It is an old boy network.

They urged 12's and 13's to begin to "annoy" management to make them branch chiefs, or else go laterally around the bottleneck. In the DO there is a perception that women lack "stayability" and will serve one or two tours overseas but not a third. They tend to get lost as Case officers.

Commentary: I was disappointed that no one addressed the subject I came to hear, namely what unique capabilities do females bring to the workplace? What I heard would have made Professor Henry Higgins very happy. "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" In effect what I heard was that women have to be more like men.

Be politically active

Learn to take risks

Think conceptually

Present a positive image

I did not hear what unique contributions women could make. It was regrettable that the panel did not address some of the issues confronting female case officers - male managers who take them off cases - women who run a branch as a deputy in the absence of a chief, only to have a man placed above them and they continue as deputy after running the branch for 2 years - being passed over for assignments either because they are married, or because they are single.